

BRONX NEWS

Beat slay horror

Tenants call for protection after Melrose Houses killing

BY KERRY WILLS
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THE FATAL beating of a slight teenage boy in Melrose Houses Monday night has neighbors calling for more protection in their crime-plagued project.

On Tuesday afternoon, a large bloodstain marred the pathway where Moises (Noah) Lora died, just yards from a playground.

Mothers pushing strollers spotted the gruesome stain and led their children away. Friends said the puddle was about the same size as Lora himself.

"It was a block beef," said Curtis Milton, 28. "He was a good kid who ran with the wrong crowd."

Lora's cause of death was blunt impact injuries to the head and neck.

Police believe his death was gang-related.

Milton said turf wars with surrounding projects have residents living in fear. Just a day before Lora's killing, a 26-year-old man was fatally shot in the head across the street from the project, in front of 285 E. 156th St. No arrests have been made.

"It just really needs to stop," Milton said. "For more than five years, they've been having their back and forth, shooting each other, stabbing each other. It's to the point where I don't want to bring my kids over here."

Kesha Graham, 40, said youths can't visit a nearby laundromat or supermarket because of the battles.

"The kids stay in jail in their own project," Graham said. "We're paying taxes for what? I don't pay taxes for kids to keep getting buried."



Jennifer Gonzalez was with Moises (Noah) Lora minutes before he was fatally beaten at Melrose Houses. His blood was visible Wednesday (inset). Photo by Kerry Wills



Her nephew, Clayton Graham, was shot dead on March 18 in the Monroe Houses in Soundview.

Jennifer Gonzalez, 21, said she stopped to chat with Lora shortly before he was killed. He was with two girls and a young man.

"I said, 'OK, bro, I'll see you later. Be careful,'" Gonzalez recalled. She later got a call from her mother that a riot was going on at Melrose Houses.

"When I got back, he was laying on the floor," Gonzalez said.

"It looked like his head was busted open."

Lora was small — probably shorter than 5 feet and less than 100 pounds, residents said. Gonzalez said he had pins in his legs from past bone breaks.

"He had a bop to him, made him look cute," said Latoya Jones, 37. "They caught the weakest one."

Lora's friends lit candles at a shrine inside the lobby of his home at 700 Morris Ave.

Patrick Jacques, 48, said the park within the project should be lit and cameras installed in ev-

ery lobby, as many front doors have broken locks.

Lora had five prior arrests, including marijuana possession.

"He was just a normal, regular boy that was trying to grow up in the 'hood," Graham said. "He's still a human being who didn't deserve to get beat to death."

Gonzalez said she knew about seven people who were murdered in the Melrose Houses.

"I went to Housing today. I'm getting a transfer. I'm scared," Gonzalez said.

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